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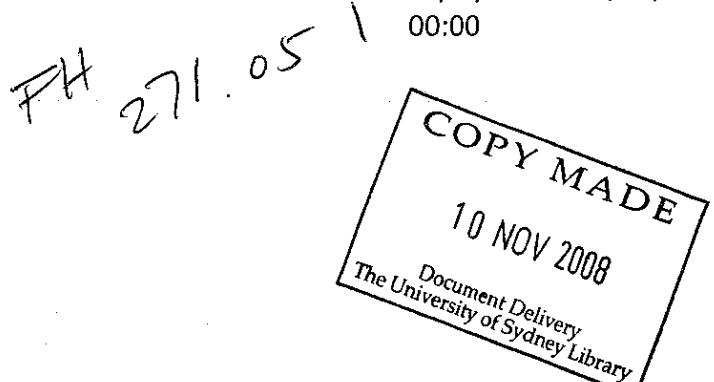
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JUANA RAASCH, O.S.B.

THE MONASTIC CONCEPT OF PURITY OF HEART AND ITS SOURCES

INTRODUCTION

The Coptic *Lives* of St. Pachomius contain an anecdote that will illustrate better than anything else the meaning of purity of heart for early monasticism. St. Pachomius, who, we are told, could read men's souls, looked upon Theodore as the most promising of all the young monks who had come to live the monastic life under his direction. Indeed, Theodore was later to succeed Pachomius, though not immediately, as ruler of the monastic congregation which he had founded. Hence from the beginning Pachomius kept an especially watchful eye on this zealous and gifted candidate. One day he was surprised to find Theodore weeping profusely. Asked the reason for his tears, the youth replied: «I desire you to tell me, O my father, that I shall see God; otherwise, what good is it to me ever to have been born?» The account continues:

Our father Pachomius asked: «Do you wish to see Him in this world or in the world to come?» Theodore answered: «I wish to see Him in the world that lasts forever.» Our father Pachomius then said: «Hasten to produce the fruit spoken of in the Gospel: "Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God" (Mt. 5, 8). And if an evil thought comes into your mind, whether it be of hatred, unkindness, jealousy, distrust toward your brother, or of human vanity, remember immediately and say to yourself, 'If I consent to any one of these things, I shall not see the Lord.'» When Theodore had heard these words from the mouth of Father Pachomius, he prepared from that time forward to walk in humility and purity, so that the Lord might fulfill his desire to see Him in the unchanging world¹.

1. L. T. LEFOUR, *Les Vies copies de saint Pachomie et de ses premiers successeurs* (Louvain, 1943), p. 64.

This story admirably sums up the motivation and the whole aim of the monastic life, later to be expressed more systematically in almost the same sense by Cassian. The importance of the concept of purity of heart as the immediate goal of the monastic life for Cassian is well known. However, there is perhaps some reason to consider the long history and development of the idea before it reached Cassian.² In his teaching on *puritas cordis* he had no intention of being original; nor was he in this case merely reproducing the ideas of his master Evagrius, although Evagrius too made much of *καθαρότης*. Here he was true to his avowed aim of transmitting the teachings and traditions of the great Desert Fathers to the West. And to understand their use of the term it is necessary to go back even farther until we come to its sources, in Greek thought, in the Bible, and in the Fathers.

I. THE GREEK CONCEPT OF PURITY

An analysis of Greek ideas of *purity* and *heart* at this point will later help to reveal to what extent the biblical expression «purity of heart» had been influenced by Greek concepts by the time it entered the vocabulary of the monastic writers.

Like all primitive religions, the religion of the Greeks possessed an elaborate system of ritual purification, *καθαρότης*. More distantly Greek, however, is the philosophical use of the word. *Καθαρός*, «purification», and *καθαρός*, «pure», «clean», with other related terms, enjoyed a considerable vogue among Greek philosophers. As a philosophical term *katharsis* can be traced as far back as the Pythagoreans. For them purification or purgation consisted in bringing man's instincts and faculties into harmony with reason, the inner god of the soul, by a combination of asceticism and the philosophical study of nature.³

² The theme of purity of heart in the writings of Cassian has been made the subject of a monograph by M. OUPH-GALLARD («La pureté de cœur d'après Cassien», *Revue d'Ascétisme et de Mystique* [1956], pp. 28-60) and has been treated in passing within most studies of the beatitudes as well as in studies of the «hearts» in biblical thought (see footnotes for some examples) and also in patristic and Eastern spirituality (cf. A. GUILLAUMONT, «Les sens des noms du cœur dans l'Antiquité» [*Etudes Carrétiennes*, XXIX (1950), *Le "cœur"*], pp. 41-81; and by the same author, «Cor et cordis affectus; le "coeur" chez les spirituels grecs à l'époque ancienne», D.S., II (1953), 2281-2288).

³ M. OUPH-GALLARD, «Ascèse: les philosophes greco-romaines», D.S., I (1957), p. 951.

Plato's definition of *katharsis* is the height of simplicity: it is nothing but the separation of the soul from the body.

What is *katharsis* but the separation of the soul from the body [...] the habit of the soul gathering and collecting herself into herself from all sides out of the body, the dwelling in her own place alone, as in another life so also in this, as far as she can — the release of the soul from the chains of the body?⁴

For Plato bodilyness is in itself impurity and represents a fallen condition.

Neoplatonism reaffirms the Platonic doctrine of *katharsis*. «What is the soul's purification?», asks Plotinus, «if not a withdrawal (*ἀνακαρπίσις*) from the body?»⁵. The body and sense images are foreign elements that must be stripped away, scoured off, from the soul (*ψυχή*), which is a spark of the divinity, to enable it to rejoin the divine Nous in an ecstatic approach made through contemplation. «Cleansing» is certainly the proper word for this idea, although it includes the positive notion of cultivating the virtues, especially those which Plotinus calls the higher and more spiritual virtues.

The word «heart» (*καρδία*) is rare in classical Greek writing in a metaphorical sense, the heart having lost the primitive role of center of an undifferentiated psychic life that it had in the archaic language of the ancient epics.⁶ Though it was given a certain theoretical importance by a school of Greek medicine which arose in Sicily in the third century B. C. and by Stoicism, which dates from the same period,⁷ these theories were not reflected in the ordinary use of the language. They were to have considerable influence on the monastic concept of purity of heart, however, so it is worth our while to consider briefly the Stoic idea of the role of the heart, or rather of the governing faculty within the heart.

Both of these schools located the rational ruling part, the *μηνιγώντες*, (also called *διανοῦτον*, *λογοτυπόν*, or *λογοτόπος*) in the heart rather than in the head. From there, according to the philo-

⁴ PLATO, *Phaedo*, B. Jowett, trans. («Great Books of the Western world», VII; Chicago, Encyclopaedia Britannica 1952), p. 225.

⁵ Plotinus, *Enneads*, 3, 6, 5, cited by H. MUSTERNUO, «The Problem of Asceticistic Fasting in the Greek Patristic Writers», *Traditio*, XII (1956), p. 4

⁶ Cf. GUILLAUMONT, *Etudes Carrétiennes*, pp. 51-52.

⁷ V. J. BURKE, *Will in Western Thought*: an Historico-Critical Survey (New York, Sheed and Ward, 1964), p. 131.

phy of the Stoia, it sends out *πνεύματα*, currents of warm air — the other seven parts or powers of the soul — to the various organs. Though anthropological monists, in practice the Stoics opposed soul and body in a manner similar to Platonic dualism, and their ideas of asceticism did not greatly differ from the *katharsis* of other philosophies. The ruling part, translated into Latin as the *principale cordis* or *principle*, was considered man's highest faculty.

Since it governed the functioning of the other parts of the soul, i.e., the five senses and the powers of speech and reproduction, collectively designated as the irrational part, the Stoics developed a notion of «custody of the heart» — the active aspect of the state of purity of heart — that was strikingly similar to the monastic concept, although of course they did not use the same biblical expression. The assent of the *hegemonikon* had to be given or refused to every sensory image (*φαντασία*), affective impulse (*θρυψίς*) or intellectual notion or thought (*έννοια*) that arose, as the Stoics considered practical choice exactly analogous to intellectual decision.⁸ A right assent will lead to a true perception, conception, or action; a false assent ends in error or sin. An excessive irrational desire (*θεμή*) becomes a passion or disturbance (*τράχης*). For the Stoics, therefore, a large part of asceticism (*τέλεσις*) consisted in right thinking and the «custody of the heart» in the sense of carefully scrutinizing each *phantasia* or *έννοια* before accepting it and in combatting false thoughts or imaginings by sound thinking and reflection. By this means the soul was kept free from the *τράχη* (the state of *ἀτάθεμα*). Nevertheless, the monks were unaware of any practice similar to their «custody of the heart» among the philosophers and considered this form of asceticism distinctively monastic. A Syriac apophthegm states that the philosophers also fast and live chastely, but that only the monks keep watch over their thoughts.⁹

At any rate, we find some of the terms and concepts that are linked with the idea of purity of heart in early monasticism, and especially in «learned monasticism» — *καθοδός*, *τάθη*, *ἀτάθεμα*,

λοργός, the idea of custody of the heart, and others — in Greek philosophy.¹⁰ Whether the monastic idea owes essential elements to these Greek influences or merely accommodated and synthesized philosophical words and concepts to a basically biblical Judaeo-Christian idea, will become clear only after a consideration of the total picture of the development of the theme.

II. THE CONCEPT IN THE BIBLE AND IN LATE JEWISH WRITINGS

Purity

In the Septuagint *καθόδος* is used to translate several synonymous Hebrew terms only vaguely distinguished from one another, the most common of which is *tahor*, «clean», «pure».¹¹ It is a negative and passive state and means freedom from contamination by any sort of filth and impurity, whether physical, legal, or more metaphorically, ethical.¹² Purity in the Old Testament was seen above all as a requirement for access into the presence of God. Any defilement jarred with God's purity and holiness, but purity conferred fitness to approach the sanctuary and participate in the liturgy, the principal place of encounter between Yahweh and His people. «Who can ascend the mountain of the Lord? or who may stand in his holy place? He whose hands are sinless, whose *heart is clean...*» (Ps., 23 [24], 3-4). This approach to the sanctuary was metaphorically termed «seeing God», or seeing the face of Yahweh¹³. Later these expressions were used to

10. For the Stoic doctrine of «custody of the heart», cf. the Roman Stoic Epicurus, *Discourses*, II, 18, 19-32; III, 12, 15. W. A. Oldfather, ed. and trans. (Loeb Library), 2 vols., New York, Putnam, 1928, vol. I, pp. 354-358; vol. II, pp. 84-86.

11. The Greek philosophers did not use the term *λοργός*, however, in the sense of «evil thoughts», though the singular form *λοργός* was used by the Stoics as a synonym for *θεμή*, and by Aristotle to signify the intellect. In non-philosophical usage *λοργός* usually meant «reckoning», «calculations». Cf. W. HELLAND, «λοργός», *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum N. T.*, IV, p. 289.

12. L. E. Toombs, «Clean and Unclean», *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, I (1962), p. 642.
13. Ps., 23 [24], 6; 10 [11], 7 (as corrected in the *Bible de Jerusalem*); Syriac Version of the *Apophthegmata Patrum*, I, no. 185 (Oxford, 1934), p. 53.

denote a more interior form of presence and approach, as in this verse from the apocryphal *Testament of Joseph*: «The Lord... is pleased... with those who approach him with a pure heart» (4,6)¹⁴. But when Psalm 10 and some of the other psalms speak of seeing God —«the straight of heart shall see his face»¹⁵—, these expressions mean nothing more than «to stand in His presence like servants before a kindly master»¹⁶. In spite of the symbolic visions of God that were sometimes granted to patriarchs and prophets at certain decisive moments of their lives, God's reply to Moses could never be forgotten: «But my face you cannot see, for no man sees me and still lives» (Ex., 33,20)¹⁷.

Although the idea of «purity» included moral purity, when unspecified the word most often denotes mere ritual cleanliness —the absence of legal defilement. Ritual defilement was incurred by violating one of the taboos which the religion of Moses had inherited from a more primitive tradition, such as touching a corpse or a leper, even unintentionally, and could be removed by a simple ceremony of bodily washing or some other form of legal purification. While the distinction between moral guilt and this mere external impurity was recognized, it was constantly becoming blurred¹⁸.

Purity of Heart

It was especially the mission of the prophets to call for a deeper notion of purity: purity of heart. «Cleanse your heart of evil, O Jerusalem, that you may be saved»¹⁹, cries Jeremias, «the prophet of the religion of the heart»²⁰. To understand the Bible's stress on purity of heart²¹ and the meaning of the combination of words, we must review the place of the heart (*leb*, *lebab*; LXX, *καρδία*) in Hebrew thought.

«With closest custody, guard your heart», warns the Wise Man, for in it are the sources of life» (Prov., 4, 23)²². It was not only, as for us, the center of the emotions, which were said to arise from the bowels, kidneys, or liver as well, but also of the will. It was the source of direction: «The heart of a man disposes his way...» (Prov., 16, 9). Primarily and especially, it was the source of the mental activities of thinking, planning and remembering, which God alone can see²³. It was, in fact, «the source of the whole personal life, in which thought, volition, feelings merge as one»; the center of personal life, and also of the interior life, the inner man. «Heart» and «hands» are often paired in the Bible to denote the whole man, the heart signifying the inner life and the hands the outer actions²⁴. «Flesh» and «mouth» or «lips» are also opposed to «heart» in the same sense of exterior actions versus inner principle²⁵. Since the heart is the source of the interior life²⁶, therefore, to purify the heart meant an interiorization of the concept of purity, «a transposition from the ritual plane to the moral plane»²⁷. purity of heart is a metaphor which stands for the removal of inner defilement, that is, sin, in its very principle: the interior dis-position²⁸.

22. This, of course, is the Scriptural source for the monastic expression «custody of the heart».

23. I Kgs., 16, 17; 3 Kgs., 8, 39; 1 Par., 28, 9; 29, 17; Is., 29, 15ff.; 65, 18; Jer., 11, 20; 12, 3; 17, 10; 20, 12; 32, 19; Job, 13, 9; 34, 21ff.; Ps., 7, 10; 16 [17]; 3, 43 [44]; 22, 138 [139], 2, 23; Prov., 17, 3; 21, 2; 24, 12; Sir., 16, 16-18; Acts, 1, 24; 1 Cor., 4, 5; Heb., 4, 12; Apoc., 2, 23.

24. L. BOUVIER, *Introduction à la Spiritualité* (New York, Desclée, 1961), p. 97. Cf. P. DHORME, «L'emploi métaphorique des noms de parties du corps en Hébreu et en Akkadien», *Revue Biblique*, XXXI (1922), pp. 493-508. Father Gustave Sieverth thinks it would be useful for theology to return to the biblical terminology of the heart in dealing with such questions as the results of original sin: «...it is better to say that the heart is inclined toward evil rather than the will or sensitive faculty, [...] a principle that, in its unity, circumscribes and determines all reality». He believes that the biblical concept is psychologically valid: «I believe there is good reason for considering the heart, the living unity of the disposition, as also the center of immediate natural existence» (Gustave Sieverth, «The Doctrine of Original Sin», *Sin*, ed. M. Oraison [New York, Macmillan, 1962], p. 145).

25. Cf. Ps., 23 [24], 4; Ps., 72 [73], 13; Lam., 3, 41; Is., 4, 8, etc.

26. Cf. Ps., 72 [73], 26; 83 [84]; Dt., 30, 14; Is., 29, 13. Cf. J. DUPONT, *Les Beatiitudes* (Bruges, Editions de l'Abbaye de Saint-André, 1954), p. 278.

27. Cf. A. GEORGE, «Le sens du péché dans l'Ancien Testament», *Lumière et Vie* (1951-1952), p. 27. Cf. J. DUPONT, *Les Beatiitudes* (Bruges, Editions de l'Abbaye de Saint-André, 1954), p. 278.

28. The purification of the heart can also be expressed as its rectification or straightening. We have seen that in Genesis the thoughts of the heart were said to have become inclined, or bent, toward evil, and thus crooked, distorted. The phrase «the straight in heart», *recti corde*, is closely related to purity of heart. Originally an expression applied to roads, the idea of straightness, rectitude, «the

- 14. Cf. J. Behrm, «καθαρός, καθαρίζω, καθαρόποιος, καθαρόποιος»; *Septuaginta, hellenistisches und rabinisches Judentum*, Th. W.N.T. III, p. 613.
- 15. Ps., 10 [11], 7; 16, 15; cf. 15, 11.
- 16. «*Bible de Jérusalem*» (Paris, Les Éditions du Cerf, 1956), note e, p. 662.
- 17. Cf. *ibid.*, note f, p. 97; A. GEORGE, «A heureux les coeurs purs! Ils verront Dieu», *Bible et vie chrétienne*, XII (1956), pp. 76-77.
- 18. Cf. A. GEORGE, «Le sens du péché dans l'Ancien Testament», *Lumière et Vie* (1951-1952), p. 27.
- 19. Isr., 4, 14; cf. Isa., 1, 16.
- 20. GEORGE, *Lumière et Vie*, p. 34.
- 21. Cf. Ps., 50 [51], 12, Prov., 20, 9; Js., 4, 8; Acts, 15, 9, etc.

This evil disposition of the heart, the source of its impurity, was variously and sometimes simultaneously expressed in the sources we are considering as evil thoughts, the evil inclinations of these thoughts (*yezer hara*); evil spirits or the demons of the vices; or simply as the evil heart.³⁰

The Thoughts of the Heart

As the seat of the reason the heart contains the «thoughts» (LXX and N. T. most often [σο]λογιον ναζοι, τρυπητοι, etc.)³¹. Our understanding of our theme must include this term, which in the Bible is used in a broader sense than intellectual conceptions. «To think (*hashab*) is to devise, to conceive, to bring something into being in the heart».³² Although there is a conceptual element in the biblical use of the word «thoughts», the term includes the meaning of impulses, dispositions, and plans as well. The Septuagint sometimes uses [σο]λογιον in a good or neutral sense, but most often it is used in an unfavorable sense, as in monasticism, even when unmodified. «Cleanse your heart of evil, O Jerusalem, that you may be saved. How long must your pernicious thoughts

straight path» implies a dynamic concept of life as a journey, a «way». The adjective «straight», εὐθυγάντις, was applied to the thoughts and the spirit as well as to the heart (cf. I Par., 29, 17; Ps., 7, 11; 10 [11], 38, 31 [32]; 11, 50, [51], 12; 63 [64], 11; 72 [73], 1; 77 [78], 37, 93 [94], 15; 96 [97], 11; Prov., 23, 19; Acts, 8, 21; also St. Augustine, *Discourses on the Psalms*, On Ps. 31 and 35; S. Hesgin and F. Corrigan, trans., «*Ancient Christian Writers*», XXIX; Westminister, Md., Newman, 1960), pp. 94, 244; Dhorme, p. 506. Another phrase is the «simple heart», a heart that is ἀντικείμενον, «single», opposed to the «double heart», whose thoughts belie the sentiments expressed by the lips (cf. Gen., 20, 5; 3 Kgs., 9, 4; Prov., 11, 20; Wisd., 1, 1; Eph., 6, 5; Col., 3, 22). James, 4, 8, opposes purity of heart to double-mindedness, showing the similarity of the ideas of the «pure heart» and the «simple heart». The Bible also speaks of a «perfect heart»: 3 Kgs., 8, 61; 11, 4; 15, 3, 14; 4 Kgs., 20, 3; Ps., 77 [78], 72, 100 [101], 2.

29. This enumeration is not intended to be exhaustive; it merely attempts to list the terms for the evil principle that are most pertinent from the point of view of monastic spirituality. Other words include κακία, τροχητιά, and St. Paul's terms εργα and διαρροή.

30. See references under note 23. Cf. Dhorme, p. 506; Headland, p. 289. Other terms used more rarely that are also translated as «thoughts» are δοκούσαις, «thoughts», «reflections», found in the Septuagint but not used in the New Testament; διδόναις, which can mean «thought», «disposition», as well as «understanding», «knowledge», «wisdom», «knowledge», «knowledge», a philosophical term occasionally found in the Gospels, and in the New Testament. See references in W. F. Arner and F. W. Ginzsch, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1952).

31. B. Vawter, «The Ways of Gods», *The Way*, IV (1964), p. 170.

(LXX διλογιοντο πόνον) Lodge within you?» (Jer 4, 14). We see that it is particularly these «thoughts of the heart» which Jeremiah refers to as the object of purification. And a proverb reads: «There are six things the Lord hates, yes, seven... A heart that plots wicked schemes...» (LXX λογιοντο ναζοι; Prov. 6, 16, 18)³³. For the «thoughts», conceived in the heart and born as words and actions, determine the quality and direction of a man's whole spiritual life. Their inclination to good or to evil, in accordance with God's will or man's own will, is the basis of personal righteousness or wickedness.³⁴

It is not only thoughts that are strictly evil that defile the heart: the Bible also speaks of vain thoughts. «The Lord knows the thoughts of men, and that they are vain»; this verse (Ps., 93 [94], 11) is quoted by St. Paul in I Cor., 3, 20. The Greek word used here is περιεργα, which means empty/fruitless, powerless, lacking truth and reality. Men's thoughts are vain when they do not view the world and creatures with reference to God, but rather as independent from God, self-existing forces to be feared and propitiated, the objects of concupiscence. This, of course, is idolatry, resulting in lack of understanding, loss of wisdom: «...seeing that, although they knew God, they did not glorify him as God or give thanks, but became vain in their reasonings, and their senseless minds have been darkened... they who exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator...» (Rom., 1, 21, 25; cf. Eph., 4, 17)³⁵.

The monastic sources, using biblical terminology, mention two basic types of harmful thoughts from which the heart must be purified: evil thoughts and vain thoughts.³⁶

The Evil Heart: the Thoughts of the Heart Are Inclined to Evil

Behind the thoughts, which are located in the heart, are the basic dispositions or inclinations which direct them, often presented as two opposing moral inclinations. We first read of the inclination

32. Cf. Ezech., 38, 10.

33. The terms βουλή, «purpose», «counsel», employed frequently by St. Paul (see references in Arner and Ginzsch, Lexicon), are similar in meaning to [σο]λογιον. Like the thoughts, the βουλαι originate in the heart (cf. I Cor., 4, 5). The heart is also said to be the seat of στριβούται, «desires», «lusts», «concupiscence» and ἐθυμούται, «desires» (cf. Sir., 5, 2; Rom., 1, 24), although these are more often associated with the flesh.

34. Cf. Wisd., 4, 12; Ps., 118, 37; 1 Tim., 6, 9. The cares and anxieties (τυσιγγης) of life also weigh down the heart; cf. 1K., 21, 34, 36; 8, 14, 10, 41; 1 Cor., 7, 33; 1 Tim., 6, 9.

of the «thoughts of the heart» to evil in Genesis. Immediately before the flood, God saw «that the wickedness of man was great upon the earth, and whole inclination (yezer) of the thoughts of his heart is to evil all day» (Gen. 6,5)³⁶. This evil bent, which makes the thoughts crooked or perverse rather than straight, is present in man from his youth: «the imagination and thought of man's heart are prone to evil from his youth: therefore I will no more destroy every living soul as I have done», says God after the Flood (Gen. 8,21). These two passages are the biblical source for the doctrine of the two yeers, given great prominence in the Jewish apocrypha and in rabbinical Judaism, and not without affinities in Judaeo-Christian thought. The yezer tob (good inclination) and the yezer hara (evil inclination) are two impulses of propensities given to every man and are sometimes portrayed as spirits³⁷. A more immediate influence on the concept of the two yeers, perhaps, is the very similar idea of the two spirits, found in the Qumran writings, in the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, and in early Christian literature³⁸. The Qumran *Manual of Discipline* teaches that «it is God that created these spirits of light and darkness and made them the basis of every act, the [instigators] of every deed, and the directors of every thoughts»³⁹. In this passage the two spirits stand in the same relation to the thoughts as the yezer in Genesis. As in the Bible, it is often difficult to determine whether the word «spirit» in these writings refers to an independent personal spirit or a psychological inclination or impulse. St. Paul's opposition of spirit (*ruach*) and flesh (*caro*) is probably related to the idea of the good and evil yeers⁴⁰.

Another explanation of the impulse to evil is found along with the «two spirits» teaching in the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*. This is the doctrine of the «demons of the vices», which depicts the vices as a multitude of evil spirits under the rule of

the spirit of darkness, the devil⁴¹. The role of evil spirits in perverting the heart, little emphasized in the Old Testament, was given great prominence in the apocrypha. Within the Old Testament the evil impulse was usually attributed to man himself, to a heart that has deviated from seeking God, saying:

«No use. We will follow our own devices; each one of us will behave according to the stubbornness of his evil heart!» (Jer., 18, 12)⁴². Self-will and God's will are the biblical version of the «two ways», and the evil heart, in which the thoughts of self-will or the rabbinical yezer hara⁴³. And, as we have seen from the passages from Genesis quoted above, a certain inclination to evil have become habitually dominant, is the Old Testament equivalent or the *Testament of Reuben concerning Thoughts* (*τροπῶν ἐπιφύλακτος*) (cf. Mt. 12, 33-35) which brings forth good or evil. Christ commands his disciples to strive for a high degree of moral purity and to keep a watchful vigilance over the thoughts and sentiments of the heart. Going even farther than prophets in his emphasis on inner purity, he actually abolishes the laws of ritual cleanliness in a key pronouncement on inner versus outer purity. When his disciples are accused of laxity in the mat-

41. Cf. DANIELOU, «Démon», pp. 168-169; B. TAVARES BETTENCOURT, *Doctrina ascetica Origenis, seu de ratione animae humanae cum daemonibus* («Studia Antwerpiana», 18, Rome, 1945), pp. 134-143. Significantly, the *Testament of Reuben*, which contains the doctrine of the «seven spirits of error», is entitled in some manuscripts *The Testament of Reuben concerning Thoughts* (*τροπῶν ἐπιφύλακτος*) (cf. The Greek Versions of the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, [Oxford, 1960], p. 1, note 1). This title is appropriate, as the Testament's main point is the need for custody of the heart against evil thoughts, especially thoughts of fornication. The titles ascribed to the *Testament of Benjamin* likewise show the close relationship uniting demons, thoughts, and heart. In some manuscripts it is subtitled «*τροπῶν διανοῶν ταῦτα*», (*τροπῶν εὐρετῶν καρδίας*) being an obvious substitute for the Hebrew *leb*) and in others it is called

SIRIEN, *Palestinian Judaism in the Time of Jesus Christ* (New York, Holt, 1964), pp. 102-104.

38. J. DANIELOU, «Démon: dans la littérature ecclésiastique jusqu'à Origène», D.S., III (1957), p. 160.

39. *Manual of Discipline*, 4, 31, in *The Dead Sea Scriptures*, T. H. Gaster, trans. and ed. (Garden City, N.Y., Doubleday, 1956), p. 44. Note the triad of «thought, word, and deed».

40. JACOBS, p. 602.

36. Translation made directly from the Hebrew. Cf. also the Hebrew text of Sir., 15, 14; 6, 22.

37. See J. JACOBS, «Yezer», *Jewish Encyclopedia*, XII, pp. 601-602; J. BON-SIRIEN, *Palestinian Judaism in the Time of Jesus Christ* (New York, Holt, 1964), pp. 102-104.

38. J. DANIELOU, «Démon: dans la littérature ecclésiastique jusqu'à Origène», D.S., III (1957), p. 160.

39. *Manual of Discipline*, 4, 31, in *The Dead Sea Scriptures*, T. H. Gaster, trans. and ed. (Garden City, N.Y., Doubleday, 1956), p. 44. Note the triad of «thought, word, and deed».

40. JACOBS, p. 602.

ter of legal purity because they eat without performing the ritual ablutions, Jesus says: «What goes into the mouth does not defile a man; but it is what comes out of the mouth that defiles a man [...] But the things that proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and it is they that defile a man. For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders...» (the whole list of evils which follows is nothing but a series of specific examples of the first generic term, «evil thoughts» [δαἰοτός τρόπος])⁴⁴. This is the passage most frequently cited by Origen as the basis of his teaching on [δα]ιοτός and is often commented upon by the Fathers.

The New Heart and the New Spirit.

Both the Old Testament and the New, therefore, are agreed in finding the true source of the impurity which separates from God in the evil inclination of the thoughts of the heart. In spite of their many appeals for conversion, the prophets had realized that man himself is not able to bring about the rectification and renewal of his own evil heart; the malicious bent of his thoughts can only be undone by a new act of creation on God's part. Man has not kept God's law; God will make a new covenant; He will inscribe an inner law on the human heart «which man knows spontaneously and possesses intimately, and from which follows a sure impulse towards the good»⁴⁵. «I will give them a heart with which to understand that I am the Lord. They shall be my people and I will be their God, for they shall return to me with their whole heart» (Jer., 24, 7). Ezekiel and Psalm 50 describe this divine action in terms of the creation of a new heart and add that the heart will be renewed through the creation of a «new spirit», a «straight spirit», to guide it⁴⁶. Going farther, they state specifically that God's actual means of reversing the evil impulse will be by

44. Mt, 15, 11. 18-20. Cf. 2 Cor., 10, 5. Is any connection made in the New Testament between evil thoughts and demons or «unclean spirits»? There seems to be at least an implicit connection. The devil works on the heart in much the same manner as the Holy Spirit. «Here the action of Satan, completely interior, is exercised on the heart of man and tends to be confounded with that of our own evil tendencies; but just as the New Testament hardly speaks of spirit without evoking the person of the Holy Spirit, it seems that it hardly speaks of sin without supposing the action of the devil, the father of sin» (S. LYONNER, «Demon: Nouveau Testament», D.S., III, p. 149).

45. A. GELIN, *Key Concepts of the Bible* (New York, Sheed and Ward, 1955), p. 94. See: Jer., 31, 33; cf. Dt., 30, 6, 11-14.

46. Ezech., 11, 19, 36, 26; Ps., 50 [51], 12.

strengthening man with His own spirit, His «holy spirit»; «I will put my spirit within you»⁴⁷. For the Bible presents «the paradox of that Spirit Who is the Spirit of God, but Who makes Himself the 'spirit' of the soul»⁴⁸. Both Ezekiel and Psalm 50 again parallel each other in describing the renovation of the heart as its purification: «A clean heart create in me, O God», prays the Psalmist (Ps., 50 [51], 12); and God promises:

I will sprinkle clean water upon you to cleanse you from all your impurities, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. I will give you a new heart and place a new spirit within you, taking from your bodies your stony hearts and giving you natural hearts. I will put my spirit within you, and make you live by my statutes, careful to observe my decrees (Ezech., 36, 25-27).

The prophetic promises were not forgotten, and in the inter-testamentary writings from Qumran we find great expectations of the cleansing of man's heart by the messianic sending of the Holy Spirit in eschatological times.

Then... God will purge all the acts of man in the crucible of His truth, and refine for Himself all the fabric of man, destroying every spirit of perversity from within his flesh and cleansing him by the holy spirit from all effects of wickedness. Like waters of purification He will sprinkle upon him the spirit of truth, to cleanse him of all the abominations of falsehood and of all pollution through the spirit of filth; to the end that, being made upright, men may have understanding of transcendental knowledge... Thus far, the spirits of truth and perversity have been struggling in the hearts of men... For God has apportioned them in equal measure until the final age, until «He makes all things new».⁴⁹

While realizing that only this divine intervention in the Last Days could effect the complete cleansing of heart and body by the new creation and the bestowal of the Holy Spirit, the members of the Qumran community prepared themselves for this event by purifying themselves as much as possible through such means as withdrawal, «fasting» in the teachings of the community, conversion expressed in an initiation ceremony, asceticism, and above all frequent ritual washings, able to remove legal defilement and to

47. Ezech., 36, 27; cf. 37, 14; 39, 29; Ps., 50 [51], 13-14.

48. BOYER, p. 153.

49. *Manual of Discipline*, 4, 20-25, Gaster, pp. 45-46.

signify a purification of the heart. It was recognized, however, that these washings could not remove sin by themselves, but only if accompanied by an inner attitude of repentance and eschatological expectation⁵⁰. Similarly, John's baptism of repentance, though differing from the Qumran lustrations in symbolizing a unique confession not to be repeated, «served», according to Josephus, «not to pardon sins but to purify the body, once the soul had been purified by righteousness»⁵¹. Luke, however, calls John's baptism a «baptism of penance for the remission of sins», though it is only a preparation for the messianic baptism with fire and the Holy Spirit, which will make men thoroughly pure (Lk. 3,3; 3,16).

The actual manner in which God fulfilled His promise, made through the prophets, to give His people a heart to know and obey Him, was perhaps not fully anticipated by the prophets who had uttered it. When fulfillment finally came, when Christ's sacrificial purification as high priest had cleansed the temple and the people, sprinkling their hearts from an evil conscience and washing their bodies with clean water (Heb., 10,22)⁵², the purification and rectification of the individual heart was achieved by means of God's *έριτμον* given through Christ by His indwelling Spirit: «the charity of God is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who has been given to us» (Rom., 5,5)⁵³. Paradoxically, «living spirit will be communicated to the redeemed through dead heart [...]». The Heart of our Lord, annihilated in death, is now the unfailing fountain from which the Spirit is poured forth [...]. The heart is the origin and goal of every action in the Kingdom of him who surrendered his Heart»⁵⁴. For, as St. Thomas teaches, «the New Law is in the first place a law that is inscribed in our hearts», and «all

its efficacy is based on the grace of the Holy Ghost, which is given through faith in Christ»⁵⁵. «Now the purpose of this charge is charity, from a pure heart» (*Ἐν καθορᾶς καρποῖς*), St. Paul writes to Timothy (I Tim., 1,5). And charity will never fail; it will continue throughout eternity, perfected in the face-to-face vision of God (I Cor., 13, 8). In the sixth beatitude Christ proclaims definitively that this vision is the fruit and reward of purity of heart: «Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God» (Mt., 5, 8). Other New Testament passages link holiness, the positive aspect of purity, and *sinlessness* with the vision of God: «Strive for peace with all men, and for that holiness without which no man will see God» (Heb., 12, 14); «no one who sins has seen him, or has known him» (I John, 3, 6). Here «to see God» is no longer a figure of speech, as in the Old Testament, but an ineffable spiritual reality which far transcends the ancient categories. It is on these texts that the Fathers base their teaching that purity of heart is a preliminary goal of the Christian life in relation to the ultimate end, the vision of God.

* * *

From the point of view of monastic spirituality, perhaps the most significant findings of this study of the place of purity of heart in the Bible and early Jewish writings are: the fact of its origin and its importance within this tradition, its link with the coming of the Holy Spirit into the heart and with the vision of God, the idea of demons clefting the heart, and above all, the relation of purity of heart with freedom from evil thoughts and the frequent biblical use of the actual word *λογυπότω*, certainly one of the most commonly recurring terms in ancient monastic literature. There can be no doubt but that A. Guillaumont is correct in saying that the expression *λογυπότω τῆς καρδίας* in Eastern spirituality has been borrowed from the language of the Septuagint⁵⁶.

50. *Ibid.*, 3, 4-6, and 13ff

51. *Jewish Antiquities*, 18, cited by J. STEINMANN, *St. John the Baptist and the Desert Tradition* (New York, Harper, 1958), p. 117.

52. The «sprinklings» of the heart seems to refer to its purification through the blood of Christ (see 9, 19), while the body is cleansed through water. There seems to be no difference between the expressions *a pure heart* and *a pure conscience* (*καθαρὸν κεφαλήν*, as also in 2 Tim., 1, 3).

53. Cf. 2 Cor., 1, 22; Gal., 4, 6; Eph., 3, 16-19; Thess., 3, 12-13; Acts, 15, 9. A detailed account of the means by which the heart was purified would involve the entire biblical theology of the redemption. Faith (Acts 15, 9; Eph., 5, 26); baptism (1 Peter, 3, 21; Eph., 6, 26, etc.), and the word of God (John, 15, 4; Eph., 6, 26) are named as the causes of cleansing. The purification of the flesh and of the spirit, of the actions and of the heart, is perfected by the Christian's entire conduct (2 Cor., 7, 1; Js., 4, 8).

54. H. RAHNER, «On the Biblical Basis of the Devotion», *Heart of the Saviour*, I. Sierl, ed. (New York, Herder and Herder, 1958), pp. 2 and 28.

55. *Summa Theologica*, I-II, Q. 1069, 1, in the translation of the English Dominican Province (London, Washbourne, 1915).

56. D.S., II, 2385.

III. THE APOSTOLIC FATHERS⁵⁷

Terminology

Both the term and the concept of purity of heart are frequently to be found in the earliest Christian writings. These writers see the new life given with the baptismal *katharsis* in terms of a moral engagement calling for the highest degree of purity of life. The so-called *Second Epistle* of Clement stresses the need for keeping Baptism «pure (*άρνητος*) and undefiled»⁵⁸. The essential holiness of Baptism, like the holiness of a temple, obliges the believer to be morally pure⁵⁹. Perhaps no one has better articulated the tremendous exigencies of the Christian vocation than a later author, St. Cyprian († 258), who wrote that after healing man's sins the Redeemer «gave a law to man restored, and bade him sin no more, lest to him who sins a greater evil befall. We have been drawn together and enclosed as it were in a narrow space by this rule of blamelessness» under which «it is not our hands that must be washed but our hearts»⁶⁰.

Among the group known as the Apostolic Fathers, the term purity of heart is employed by two of the most Judaeo-Christian, Hermas and the Pseudo-Barnabas, while most of the others share the concept even when they do not use the exact term⁶¹. Some of them come extremely close to it, however, as when St. Clement

of Rome speaks of «holiness of heart» (*καθαρότης καρδιας*)⁶² or of soul (*διονύσιος ψυχής*)⁶³, «pure conscience» (*καθαρή οὐνία* or *ἀρνητή οὐνία*)⁶⁴ and «a pure mind» (*καθαρή διάνοια*)⁶⁵; St. Ignatius of being «pure in conscience»⁶⁶ and of being pure both in flesh and in spirit⁶⁷, and the author of the *Epistle to Diognetus* directs his pagan correspondent at the outset, «Come then, purify yourself of all prejudiced thoughts (*λογισμῶν*) that occupy your mind»⁶⁸. The use of the word *λογισμοί* in the last phrase in relation to purity of the *dianoia* is especially close to the biblical and to the later monastic usage, though employed here in a more intellectual sense. The absence of the word *καρδία* in these expressions, except in the case of Clement, can easily be explained by the fact that among all but the most Jewish of the Judaeo-Christians there was a tendency in the beginning to use some other word — *ψυχή*, *διάνοια*, *νοῦς*, *οντολογία* — when not directly quoting from the Bible, as *kardia* in the metaphorical sense fell strangely upon Hellenistic ears, especially as the center of intellectual life.

Clement, Ignatius, and Polycarp and the Inner Purposes of the Heart

In the epistles of three early bishops, St. Clement of Rome, St. Ignatius of Antioch, and St. Polycarp, we have a concept of purity of heart that is often expressed in terms of the innermost thoughts and purposes. It is above all «holiness of heart» or «purity of mind» or of «conscience» in this sense that Clement is attempting to restore to the strife-torn Corinthians. For Clement, as for all the early Church, it is the heart and its inner thoughts that matter. If what the lips say is belied by the heart, the desire for peace is hypocritical⁶⁹. This purity is described through a variety of terms signifying «thoughts» in the biblical sense, that is, man's inner activity as a whole, but with the volitional and moral aspects predominating over the idea of a purely intellectual activity.

57. I am reserving the consideration of the so-called *Second Epistle of Clement* to the *Corinthians* mainly for the following section, for reasons that will be explained. References to the Apostolic Fathers will be to the edition of K. Lake, *The Apostolic Fathers* (Loeb Library), 2 vols.; New York, Putnam, 1930.

58. 6, 9, p. 138; cf. also 8, 6, p. 140.

59. F. X. Drewett, *The Resurrection of Christ*; a Biblical Study, Rosemary Sheed, trans. (New York, Sheed and Ward, 1960), p. 236.

60. *De opere et eleemosynis*, P.I., 4, 601. Translation taken from M.F. Tocal, ed. and trans., *The Sunday Sermons of the Great Fathers*, II (Chicago, Regnery, 1938), p. 113.

61. Clement's *Epistle to the Corinthians* contains the prayer, «Create a pure heart in me. O God», (18, 10, p. 40), but this is within a quotation of Psalm 50 [51] in its entirety.

62. 32, 4, p. 62; 60, 2, p. 114.

63. 18, 10, p. 140; *διονύσιος* and *διονύσης* favorite expressions of Clement, have reference ordinarily to devoutness and piety, holiness. But *διονύσιος* can also mean «ceremonially pure», «consecrated», and was probably originally a cultic word used in the mysteries.

64. 1, 3, p. 10; 45, 7, p. 87.

65. 21, 8, p. 48.

66. *Trall.*, 7, 2, p. 218.

67. 10, 3, p. 184.

68. 21, 1, p. 350.

69. 15, pp. 32-34.

Following the psychologically sound literary convention that a rebuke should be preceded by praise, he lauds the Corinthians' former state, when they were filled with holy thoughts and purposes (*ἅγιας βουλῆς*).⁷⁰ «On the young too», he reminds them, «you enjoined temperate and seemly thoughts (*μετριαὶ καὶ σωγὰ νοοῦ*), and to the women you gave instruction that they should do all things with a blameless and seemly and pure conscience» (*Ἐν αἰσθούσῃ καὶ σεωνῆσῃ δημηδίζει*).⁷¹ This state of pure and holy thoughts included—or rather, proceeded from—the thought of Christ: «and paying attention to his words you stored them up carefully in your hearts and kept his sufferings before your eyes».⁷² Their former condition of mind could be summed up in the statement, «The commandments and ordinances of the Lord were 'written on the tables of your heart'» (Prov., 7, 3).⁷³ But now there has been a change, and «each goes according to the lusts (*ἰμωμαῖς*) of his wicked heart».⁷⁴ Clement calls for a *μετριοῦσα*, a change of mind and thoughts: «Let us put aside empty and vain thoughts» (*Ἐνος νεώς καὶ μετριοῖς φροντίσας*).⁷⁵

But this conversion can only be effected through Christ, and by a return to the thought of Christ: «Let us fix our gaze on the Blood of Christ, and let us know that it is precious to his Father...»

Several other biblical terms express the idea of evil thoughts, including the monastic *logismoi*: Clement speaks of «the purposes of men» (*τοῖς ἀτηναῖς τὸν αὐθιόντων*)⁷⁶ and «the designs of the heathen» (*ἱοπομούσις ἔβυῶν*)⁷⁷. Urging a familiar biblical argument for custody of the heart, and one that is frequently repeated in patristic writings, he reminds the Corinthians that God sees our inward thoughts: «Let us observe how near he is, and that nothing escapes him of our thoughts (*ἴννοιῶν*) or of the devices (*διαλογισμῶν*) which we make [...] live holily [...] with a pure mind (*ἐπικαθευκῆ διανοΐᾳ*). For he is a searcher of thoughts (*ἴννοιῶν*) and

σεωνῆσῃ δημηδίζει).

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reflections (*ἐπιθυμήσεων*); his spirit (*πνοῇ*)⁷⁸ is in us, and when he will be shall take it away».⁷⁹

Once more, the remedy is to fix the gaze of heart, through Jesus Christ, on God. This expression contains two notions, that of carrying out the divine will and the idea of contemplative illumination (*πνόησις*).

Although St. Ignatius is also concerned with the heart's purpose, his approach to this subject is somewhat different and highly original. He does not use many of terms employed by Clement, though in one place he speaks of a blameless mind (*ἀμεμένη διάνοιαν*)⁸⁰ and elsewhere he urges the usual considerations (though giving them his own personal impress) that God sees our thoughts, with the consequent requirement to act in accordance with the divine presence within which through love will make itself felt in contemplation.⁸¹

Ignatius' favorite word for the heart's purpose is *ψυχὴν*, by which he means the mind-set or disposition, something like the rabbinical *yezers*, which is the habitual inclination or disposition of the thoughts of the heart.⁸² Strictly speaking, *gnome* is related to «thoughts» as habit to acts, though the two terms are so close that they are sometimes interchanged, so to speak, in patristic writings, *gnomai* then being used for «impulses» and *logismos* for the habitual tendency of the mind and will.

Though Ignatius does not say so in so many words, he distinguishes two *gnomai*, like the two *yezers*, according to which men can live, that of God and that of the devil. God's *gnome*⁸³ includes

⁷⁹. The word *πνοή* means primarily breath, but is also used for spirit. The notion of spirit developed from the primitive concept that God breathes His breath into every man to give him life and takes it back again at death. A morning prayer recited by devout Jews and probably dating from the beginning of the second century expresses the same idea: «My God, you have given me a pure soul. You will take it away from me, and you will give it back in the time to come [...] give it back to him to whom you received it» (Sim. IX, 23, 3, p. 294. Cf. also Sim. V, 6, pp. 166-168; Sim. V, 7, pp. 168-170, and Sim. VIII, 3, pp. 194-196.)

⁸⁰. 2, 2, 3, p. 10; cf. 45, 7, p. 86.

⁸¹. 1, 3, p. 10.

⁸². 2, 1, p. 10.

⁸³. 2, 8, p. 12.

⁸⁴. 3, 4, p. 14.

⁸⁵. 7, 2, p. 18.

⁸⁶. 7, 4, pp. 18-20.

⁸⁷. 14, 2, p. 31.

⁸⁸. 59, 3, p. 110; cf. Ps., 32 [33], 10.

⁸⁹. 6, 2, p. 258; Poly., 8, 1, p. 276.

⁹⁰. 21, 1-3, 8, 9, pp. 46-48.

⁹¹. 36, 2, p. 70.

⁹². *Tract.*, 1, 1, p. 213; cf. also *Rom.*, Inscript., p. 226.

⁹³. *Eph.*, 15, 3, p. 188.

⁹⁴. Cf. The introduction by P. Sherwood to St. MAXIMUS THE CONFESSOR, *The Ascetic Life. The Four Centuries on Charity* («Ancient Christian Writers», XXI; Westminster, Md. Newman, 1955), pp. 58-59.

⁹⁵. *Eph.*, 3, 2, p. 176; *Rom.*, 7, 1, p. 234; 8, 3, p. 237; *Phila.*, 1, 2; p. 240;

⁹⁶. *Smyrn.*, 6, 2, p. 258; Poly., 8, 1, p. 276.

that of Christ and of the bishop⁸⁶. Harmony with the bishop's *gnome*, then, means harmony with God⁸⁷; and it is this unity that is the one source of purity of heart in the New Covenant; even as under the Old Law ritual purity meant unity with the Temple sanctuary of sacrifice: «He who is within the sanctuary is pure (*καθεστός*), but he who is without the sanctuary is not pure; that is to say whoever does anything apart from the bishop and the presidency is not pure in his conscience»⁸⁸ or *ναυάρος ἐστιν τῇ συνείδησεῖ*⁸⁹.

A Christian may become infected by the *gnome* of the prince of this world, whom Ignatius shows as working less through inner suggestion⁹⁰ than by means of human agents — heretics, Judaizers, martyrdom and work to prevent it⁹¹. For him «purity of conscience» or of heart is not so much a matter of individual morality, of keeping pure from sin, whether of thoughts or of action, as of having the mind of Christ in unity with the bishop in the Church. Paradoxically, Ignatius is at once the most original, spontaneous, ardently mystical and intensely generous of the Apostolic Fathers in his desire for total configuration to Christ and renunciation of the world, and the most churchly, almost official, though never juridical — perhaps the least concerned with introspective custody of the heart.

A different emphasis, closer to that of Clement, is found in the counsels of Ignatius' friend Polycarp of Smyrna, who in his exhortations to the Philippians urges great moral purity on all classes but seems to expect this quality in its highest degree, namely purity of the heart and its thoughts, especially from two select categories, the widows and the virgins. Again we find the theme that «God sees the heart», as well as two terms for «thoughts» which we have already come across in Clement, one of which is the familiar monastic *logismoi*, while the other, *emōia*, was a favorite word of the Greek philosophers⁹². Here also we note the theme of the consecrated life of chastity as an offering of spiritual sacrifices to God. Widows must pray ceaselessly and refrain from

all evil, «knowing that they are an altar of God, and that all offerings are tested [for purity], and that nothing escapes him of reasonings (*λογοτύπων*) or thoughts (*έμοιῶν*) or of the 'secret things of the heart' (I. Cor., 14:25)»⁹³. «The virgins must walk with a blameless and pure (*ἀφράτη*) conscience»⁹⁴.

Barnabas and Hermas and the Problem of Post-Baptismal Purification of the Heart

While the three writers we have been discussing emphasized what might be called a «realized» purity of heart, one that had already been achieved by the Redemption and given in Baptism and entailed serious personal obligations in regard to its preservation, the Pseudo-Barnabas and Hermas tended to think of it as something that still needed to be perfected, either by its fulfillment in the eschatological future (Barnabas) or by its renewal in the present (Hermas).

Like St. Justin, who urges many of the same arguments in his *Dialogue with Tryphon*, the Epistle of Barnabas makes use of texts from the prophets and their emphasis on service from the heart to argue against a literal interpretation of the Law. «The whole Epistle expresses the efforts of a Jewish Christian to induce Jews to forsake ritual observance, and to show them that Judaism finds its true realisation in Christianity»⁹⁵. This realisation is found in the interiorisation of ritual practices. Thus God does not want animal sacrifices, but the sacrifice of a pure and contrite heart (Ch. 2); not bodily fasting, but charity to the poor; not circumcision of the flesh, but circumcision of the heart and the hearing unto obedience (Ch. 9); not abstinence from the flesh of impure animals, but abstinence from impure deeds (Ch. 10). It is the heart that matters — this belief is shared by all the patristic writers⁹⁶;

⁹² 4, 3, p. 288.

⁹³ 5, 3, p. 290.

⁹⁴ J. DANIELOU, *The Theology of Jewish Christianity*, J. A. Baker, ed. and trans. («The Development of Christian Doctrine before the Council of Nicea», I; Chicago, Regnery, 1964), p. 35.

⁹⁵ The concept of the primacy of the heart, the importance of the inner disposition, arose, of course, within Judaism itself, as I have attempted to show. It was especially, though not exclusively, the teaching of the prophets, but was continued by the Essene groups, in spite of their ritualism, as, for instance, in their boycott of the Temple sacrifices. Christianity carried this emphasis a step further by rejecting the concept of ritual purity. Gnosticism was to exaggerate it. Christian writers like «Barnabas» and Justin appealed to this prophetic tradition in the controversies and apologetic writings directed to Jews and claimed that

⁸⁶ *Eph.*, 3, 2, 4, 1, p. 176.

⁸⁷ Cf. *Tat.*, 7, 1, p. 218; *Eph.*, 4, 1, p. 176.

⁸⁸ *Trall.*, 7, 2, p. 218.

⁸⁹ But see *Eph.*, 10, 3, p. 184.

⁹⁰ *Phila.*, 6, 2, p. 244; *Rom.*, 7, 1, p. 233

⁹¹ It is also very frequently used in the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, see note 41.

but the *Epistle* is extreme in denying any validity to the Old Law in its literal sense.⁹⁰

So important is purity of heart for the Pseudo-Barnabas that he names it as one of the two main themes of the apostolic kerygma: the apostles «preached to us the forgiveness of sins and the purification of the heart» (*τὸν διάνυσθαι τὴς κοπιαῖς*)⁹¹; Impurity is partially removed through Baptism⁹², which is a new creation⁹³, a renewal of the heart⁹⁴ making us like innocent children⁹⁵, by which God truly dwells in our hearts⁹⁶, and a sort of exorcism whereby the divine Spirit replaces the evil spirits⁹⁷. One of the prescriptions of the «Two Ways» section enjoins individual moral effort: «So far as thou canst, thou shalt keep thy soul pure»⁹⁸.

Yet the author argues that complete purity of heart in the sense of freedom from all iniquity will not be granted until the Millennium:

If, then, anyone has at present the power to keep holy the day which God made holy by being pure in heart (*καθηγεῖς δὲ τῇ νομῷ*), we are altogether deceived. See that we shall indeed keep it holy at that time, when we shall enjoy true rest, when we shall be able to do so because we have been made righteous ourselves and have received the promise, when there is no more sin, but all things have been made new by the Lord: then we shall be able to keep it holy because we ourselves have first been made holy.⁹⁹

Christianity represented its fulfillment. Though they are right in stressing the element of interiority which is so prominent in the New Testament writings, in this polemic they tended to exaggerate Jewish externalism. An example which shows how the tradition of the primacy of the heart lived on in Judaism is the book *An Introduction to the Duties of Hearts*, edited by the Maritains and written by Bahya Ibn Pakuda, who lived in Spain in the eleventh century. He divides religious duties into those of the body and those of the heart and teaches that the latter are much more important. «External acts approach perfection only to the point that they spring from sound inner dispositions», M. RAVAILA DE SION, «Bahya Ibn Pakuda, Tutor of Hearts», *The Bridge*, IV (1961), p. 255.

⁹⁵ The Ebionites also tampered with the literal meaning of the Old Testament with their theory of false prophecies. Cf. DANIELOU, *Theology of Jewish Christianity*, pp. 60-61.

⁹⁷, 8, 3, p. 368; cf. 5, 1, p. 354; 14, 5, p. 390; and Justin's statement that Christ suffered «to purify souls from all iniquity» (*Diolog. with Tryphon*, PG, 6, 564). There is also a reference to simplicity of heart in the «Two Ways» section, 19, 2. Cf. DANIELOU, *Theology of Jewish-Christianity*, p. 365.

⁹⁸, 11, 11, p. 383.

⁹⁹, 16, 8, p. 398.

¹⁰⁰, 6, 14, p. 362.

¹⁰¹, 6, 10, p. 360.

¹⁰², 16, 8, p. 398; 6, 15, p. 362.

¹⁰³, 11, 11, p. 382; 16, 7, p. 398.

¹⁰⁴, 9, 8, p. 104.

¹⁰⁵, 15, 6-7, p. 394. Cf. 6, 19, p. 362.

In sum, the *Epistle* is greatly concerned with the heart's purity, not expressly as the absence of evil in the inner thoughts and poses¹⁰⁶, but in the sense of the baptismal remission of sins, cleansing from evil spirits, and renewal of the heart by the divine Presence, and finally in the expectation of a definitive eschatological cleansing.

For while the general early Christian tradition emphasized Baptism as the principal fulfilment of the prophetic promises of purification of the heart by the Holy Spirit, another opinion continued to place this expectation mainly in the eschatological future, seeing «in the work of the Baptist and of Jesus the sign of impending eschatological fulfillment and the approach to it, and hopefully awaited the Spirit that would come to purify them»¹⁰⁷. This tradition gave rise in some early Christian community to a verse which we find added on to the Lukian version of the Our Father in the writings of Marcion, St. Gregory of Nissa, and St. Maximus the Confessor: «May thy Holy Spirit come upon us and purify us» (*εἰσέστε τὸ θεῖον μαριμόντων ἐφ' ἡμάς καὶ καθαρίστων ἡμάς*, Lk, 11, 2, v. 1).

Although not millenarianistic and mainly concerned with the problem of post-baptismal purification, the *Shepherd of Hermas* like the *Epistle of Barnabas* in its Judaeo-Christian flavor and in its emphasis on both the form and concept of purity of heart. Purity of heart, in the sense of the absence of evil desires (*εὐθύνα*) and actions, is the true fast to God¹⁰⁸. Christians should have the purity and innocence of children¹⁰⁹. That purity of heart is a key concept in the *Shepherd* can easily be deduced from a glance at the references to it under the word *καθηγεῖ* in the Arndt and Gingrich Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, most of which are coupled with *καθηγεῖς*. «Purify your heart»—usually some form of *καθηγεῖτε*—is the constant refrain of the *Shepherd*, and the conclusion of many of the angel's commandments and parables. It is sometimes stated as a general command¹¹⁰. At other times it is completed with a phrase

¹⁰⁶. Except in the «Two Ways» section, 19, 3, p. 402, where we find the precept, «Thou shall form no evil thought (βευτῆν) against thy neighbor». The same sentence is contained in the *Didache*, 2, 6, p. 312, which also has the command «Be not a [...] thinker of evil» (ταύτης φαῦλος) (3, 6, p. 314).

¹⁰⁷. LOHMEYER, cited in K. BECKER and M. PETER, *Our Father* (Chicago, Regnery, 1956), p. 2.

¹⁰⁸. Sim. V, 1, 5, p. 152.

¹⁰⁹. Sim. IX, 28, 3, p. 28; cf. *Epistle of Barnabas*, 6, 11, p. 360.

¹¹⁰. Vis. III, 9, 8, p. 50; Sim. VI, 52 p. 182.

beginning with *ἀνέῳ* which indicates the precise objects of purification: evil desires (*εὐθυγάτι*),¹¹¹ and the vices of sadness (*λύπη*)¹¹² and double mindedness (*διψυχία*)¹¹³, which are also spoken of as evil spirits, *pneumata*,¹¹⁴ — the concept of the demons of the vices, so prominent in the Jewish apocrypha.

Hermas taught that though the hearts of Christians had been purified at the time of their Baptism, some had again defiled themselves,¹¹⁵ and therefore needed a second cleansing by a *metanoia*, a changing of thoughts and turning toward God. The defilement was a result of the entry of the demons of the vices into a heart inhabited by the Holy Spirit of Christ¹¹⁶ and by the «holy spirits» of the virtues of the Son of God.¹¹⁷ Consequently, the Holy Spirit and the virtues give way to the vices, or, at the very least, the Holy Spirit is grieved,¹¹⁸ soiled or weakened.¹¹⁹

The demons introduce evil desires or thoughts into the heart. Hermas does not use the word *logistoi*, as do Clement and Polycarp, but the concept of evil thoughts is clearly present throughout his work. It appears in the very opening paragraph when Hermas tells of his «impure thought» concerning the lady Rhoda, whose slave he had once been. «When I saw her beauty I reflected in my heart (*οὐελογῆσαντες εἰν τῇ καρδίᾳ μου*; note that Hermas here uses a verbal form of *logismos*),¹²⁰ and said: 'I should be happy if I had a wife of such beauty and character.' This was my only thought (*ἡμῶν τότε ἐβολεῦσαντες*), he protests defensively, «and no other, no not one».¹²¹ This incident was the occasion of his first vision, when «the Heaven was opened», and Hermas saw «that woman

whom I had desired» greeting him and accusing him of sin.¹²² Hermas defends himself: «Did I sin against you? In what place, or when did I speak an evil word to you?»¹²³ But it was not a sin of word or deed with which the lady charged Hermas; in Christian teaching even an evil desire or thought is counted as an evil deed.

*She laughed and said to me: «The desire of wickedness (*ἡ εὐθυγάτια τέλη τωνηγίας*) came up in your heart. Or do you not think that it is an evil deed (*ἔργον*) for a righteous man if an evil desire comes up in his heart? Yes, it is a sin», said she, «and a great one. For the righteous man thinks righteous things (*γίατα βούλευται*). [...] But they who think evil in their hearts bring upon themselves death and captivity...»*¹²⁴

Hermas is partially consoled, however, when a vision of another woman, who turns out to be the Church, puts things in a better perspective, pointing out that his meritorious conduct as a servant of God will not go completely for nothing merely on account of a passing thought. Still, the earlier point is not weakened: «but for all that», she reminds him, «the thing did enter your heart concerning her. It is such a design (*βούλη*) as this which brings sin on the servants of God. For it is an evil and mad purpose (*βούλη*)...»¹²⁵

The same teaching is repeated in Mandate IV, 1, 1-3 (p. 76): «For this thought (*ἐθύμησεν*) [of lust] is a great sin for the servant of God. And if any man commit this wicked deed (*ἔργον*) he works death for himself.» The thought or desire of adultery is a sin, like the act, though committed in the heart. Hermas' doctrine here is the pure Gospel teaching.¹²⁶

In the case of wicked thoughts in general, not limited exclusively to thoughts of sexual desire, the Shepherd instructs Hermas, in the famous chapter on the discernment of spirits, that the thought is the source of sin.

For though a man be faithful, if the thought (*ἐθύμησεν*) of that angel of wickedness rise in his heart, it must be that that man or woman commit some sin. But again, though a man or woman be very evil,

- 111. Mand. XII, 6, 5, p. 136.
- 112. Mand. X, 4, p. 116.
- 113. Mand. IX, 7, p. 108.
- 114. Mand. X, 1, 2, p. 110.
- 115. Sim. IX, 6, 4-6.
- 116. Mand. V, 1, 1-2, p. 86.
- 117. Sim. IX, 13, 2, p. 252.
- 118. Mand. III, 1, 4, p. 74.
- 119. Mand. V, 1, 2-5, pp. 86-88; V, 2, 5, 6, 8, p. 92. Audet holds that the idea of the Holy Spirit found in the *Shepherd* ranges from divinity to creaturehood and is more akin to the Jewish concept than to that of other Christian writers, and in fact corresponds to the Qumran tradition, especially in the idea that the Holy Spirit could be soiled. J.-P. Audet, «Affinités littéraires et doctrinaires du *Mandat de discipline*», *Revue Biblique*, LX (1953), pp. 60-68. Daniélou disagrees with this interpretation. Cf. *Theology of Jewish Christianity*, pp. 142-143.
- 120. Cf. also Mand. IX, 2, p. 106; Sim. IX, 18, 4, p. 284.
- 121. Vis. 1, 1, 2, p. 6.

122. Vis. I, 1, 4-5, p. 8.

123. Vis. I, 1, 7, p. 8.

124. Vis. I, 1, 8, p. 8.

125. Vis. I, 2, 4, pp. 10-12.

126. Cf. Mt., 5, 28; 6, 21; 12, 34; 1K, 12, 34; 24, 32; Js., 3, 14; 5, 8.

if there rise in his heart the deeds of the angel of righteousness, it must needs be that he do some good act.¹²⁷

Not only, then, do all evil thoughts come from evil spirits¹²⁸, the Shepherd speaks of them in a deterministic sense as inevitably resulting in sin. Consent of the will, acceptance of the thought, must be implied, however: else Hermas could not be urged to resist evil thoughts.¹²⁹

It happens that Hermas never uses the actual phrase «purify your heart», which he repeats so often, in regard to evil thoughts. He expresses the idea of evil thoughts as the object of purification in other ways, however. Speaking of temptations to apostasy and addressing those who «were fearful, were in doubt, and considered (ἀναγένεται) in their hearts whether they should deny or confess and suffered» in the persecution, the angel says, «See to it, then, you who have these thoughts, lest this thought (*βούλη*) remain in your hearts and you die to God»¹³⁰. The thought alone is dangerous, even though it was not carried out and the Christians suffered for their faith. Here Hermas shows himself to be something of a rigorist. Elsewhere he speaks of custody of the heart with regard to evil thoughts of lust: «I command you», he said, «to keep purity (*θυλλαρεῖν τὴν κύπελλον*), and let not anything come into your heart about another man's wife [...] See to it, then, abstain from this thought (*ἐνθυμηθεῖν*), for where holiness lives, lawlessness ought not to enter the heart of a righteous man»¹³¹.

For Hermas, then, following the same trend seen in the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* and in other Jewish and Judaeo-Christian apocrypha, evil thoughts and desires are diabolical influences (*διάβολες*) which are the source of all sin and place the soul under the power of the demons of the vices¹³², which then crowd the Holy Spirit and the virtues out of the heart.

On the positive side, Hermas offers a remedy for evil thoughts and an impure heart that we have already found in Clement of Rome and Ignatius. Just as they speak of turning the heart toward Christ, Hermas talks of having the heart towards God (*πρὸς τὸν*

θεόν)¹³³, towards the Lord (*πρὸς τὸν κύπρον*)¹³⁴, or of the heart becoming pure towards the Lord (*ἐπεινὴ καὶ πονηρὰ γένηται πρὸς κύπρον*)¹³⁵. Besides the ordinary meaning of conversion and repenance¹³⁶ and of continually following the will of God¹³⁷, «having the heart towards God» also refers to a longing for God, an eagerness for knowledge of the Godhead and holy things, and a freedom from distracting occupations, which fills the heart with the fear of the Lord and thus with the Lord's actual indwelling presence and confers spiritual enlightenment and understanding¹³⁸. «Cleave to the Lord», is the Shepherd's counsel to Hermas, «and you shall understand and perceive all things»¹³⁹. Purification and gnosis work reciprocally; understanding comes only with purity of heart.

* * *

To conclude, the concept of purity of heart in the Apostolic Fathers is in general one of freedom from evil thoughts and impulses, with the diabolical origin of these impulses explicitly stated by the Pseudo-Barnabas and by Hermas, the latter equating the vices with demons. There is a great awareness of the New Testament stress on the primacy of the heart in the sense of the inner motivation, as well as a consciousness of the divine indwelling and of the *katharsis* effected through Baptism, with a consequent sense of the high moral obligations entailed. This concept does not differ greatly from that found in the Bible and has many affinities with the Qumran writings and other documents of intertestamental Judaism, especially in the case of «Barnabas» and Hermas.

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(To be continued.)

127. Mand. VI, 2, 7-8, p. 98.
128. Mand. VI, 2, 5, pp. 96-98.
129. Cf. Mand. IV, 1, 3, p. 78.
130. Sim. IX, 18, 4-5, pp. 284-286.
131. Mand. V, 1, 1, 3, pp. 76-78.
132. Sim. IX, 13, 8, p. 255.

133. Vis. III, 3, 4, p. 34.
134. Mand. X, 1, 6, p. 112. See Ps., 24 [25], 15, «My eyes are ever toward the Lord».

135. Mand. XII, 6, 5, p. 136.

136. Mand. XII, 6, 2, p. 136.

137. Mand. XII, 6, 5, p. 136.

138. Mand. X, 1, pp. 110-112; Vis. III, 3, 4, p. 34.

139. Sim. VI, 5, 1, p. 180.

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308/7

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